DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 119 829 PS 008 391

AUTHOR Peshbach, Norma Deitch; Peshbach, Seymour
TITLE Punishment: Parent Rites vs. Children's Rights.
PUB DATE Aug 75
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association (83rd, Chicago, Illinois, August 30-September 3, 1975)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Anxiety; Child Abuse; *Child Advocacy; *Child Rearing; Corporal Punishment; Discipline; *Family (Sociological Unit); Family Relationship; Literature Reviews; *Parent Child Relationship; Parent Responsibility; Parent Role; *Punishment; Socialization

ABSTRACT

This critical review of literature on punishment practices and child rearing examines the question of children's rights in the context of parent practices, values and prerogatives. Society regards the family unit as a sacrosanct system open to inspection and intervention only when there is tangible evidence of physical child abuse. The recent upsurge of interest in the problem of child abuse may be attributed to heightened awareness rather than an increase in abuse occurrence as it was not very long ago that many abusive child rearing practices were accepted procedures for socializing the child. The definition of cruel and unusual punishment should be extended to all forms of punishment which leave negative consequences for the growth and wellbeing of the child. Literature is reviewed on: (1) patterns of parent punishment practices, (2) effects of physical and psychological punishment practices, (3) alternatives to physical and psychological punishment which serve the functions of socialization while furthering the cause of children's rights and welfare, and (4) implications and implementation of the proposed alternatives. It is suggested that making child rearing practices more open to scrutiny would not only protect children's interests and rights but would encourage parents to discuss their problems, ask for guidance and take advantage of available resources. (GO)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED119829

PS008391

PUNISHMENT: PARENT RITES VS. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Norma Deitch Feshbach and Seymour Feshbach

University of California, Los Angeles

Introduction

The intent of this paper is to examine the question of children's rights in the context of parent practices, values and prerogatives. The issues of children's rights can be approached from many different perspectives inasmuch as the question of children's rights impinges upon many significant and sensitive aspects of our social structure and values.

In past years some attention has been given to children's rights in regard to industrial exploitations (Berger, 1971), gross neglect, sexual abuse (Helfer & Kempe, 1972; Kempe & Helfer, 1972), and physical harm (Gil, 1970; Light, 1974). More recently the scope of issues has been broadened to include a new set of considerations generated by changes in society. Thus there is concern with children's rights in regard to therapy (Robinson, 1974), diagnostic labeling (Mercer, 1974), incarceration (Ohlin, Coates & Miller, 1974), foster care and adoption practices (Berger, 1971; Jenkins & Norman, 1972; Mnookin, 1974), effect of education (Falk, 1941; Finkelstein, 1975), and even privacy and other legal privileges (Rodham, 1974).

However, with the exception of extreme violation of children's physical integrity, there has been relatively little attention given to issues bearing upon children's rights within the family structure. There are a number of reasons which may account for this state of affairs. Most paramount, a family is considered to be a sacrosanct system, invulnerable and impervious to outside inspection and influence. Only when a family system or its subsystem parts manifest open deviation from prescriptive behaviors is license extended for

analysis of the internal workings of the family.

It appears to us that an adequate understanding of the ramifications of the concept of children's rights requires an invasion of the family sanctum. An appropriate vehicle on which to focus this analysis is the question of parent practices, specifically parent punishment practices. In addressing ourselves to parent punishment, it is recognized that the traditional domain of parent rights may be encroached upon, an issue to which we shall return. Further, the complexity of evaluating children's and parent's rights in regard to punishment practices is also acknowledged. Social values regarding types of punishment vary markedly as a function of cultural settings, age and sex of the child, the "legitimacy" of the provocation, historical period and presumed function of the punishment. Moreover, psychologists are not unanimous in their views and advocacies regarding the desirability and effect of different forms of punishment. These difficulties not withstanding, it is our plan to evaluate the degree to which various categories of punishment infringe upon children's rights in relation to their psychological effects.

There is one category of punishment that is not a contemporary issue--namely, the use of extreme physical punishment which results in visible physical injury to the child. These injuries may include fractures, cuts, burns, singly or multiply--in brief, those signs or symptoms that are encompassed by the battered child syndrome which is the designation currently used to signify the problem of child abuse by caretakers (Kempe et al., 1962).

This social problem has become an important and salient public and professional issue. In the fields of public and mental health, a variety of preventive and interventive programs are being developed and implemented to reduce the incidence of child abuse. These programs include therapeutic and counseling help for the child abusers and more important perhaps, the

development of diagnostic procedures for the prediction of high risk parents (Kempe & Helfer. 1972; National Center for the Prevention & Treatment of Child Abuse & Neglect; Parents Anonymous Inc.; Paulson & Blake, 1969). It is instructive to note that this major social problem had little visibility until quite recently. When one considers the number of families involved, estimates ranging from 500,400 to 2,000,000 in the United States alone (Gil, 1970; Light, 1974; Parke, 1975), and how few helping services were available, the degree of resistance to intervention in family practicesbecomes evident.

The fact that we are witnessing a dramatic change in interest in the problem of child abuse and in the expansion of funding efforts and programs in this area, does not necessarily represent a significant change in fundamental child rearing values by either the family or society at large. For some time now, there have been legal sanctions (Paulsen, 1966; Rodham, 1974), community group efforts (McFerran, 1958; Parke, 1975), periodic expressions of professional concern (Gil, 1974; Kaufman, 1962; Kempe, 1973), and broad social disapproval in regard to the physical abuse of children. These various forces have now coalesced into a more integrated and potent movement to reduce the incidences and effects of child abuse, especially in the United States.

It was not so long ago that many of the child training practices which are now considered as brutal and abusive were accepted procedures for socializing the child. These practices were not merely reluctant expressions of "last resort" actions, but were recommended, advocated and endowed with virtue and even biblical support (Radbill, 1968). This history of child TRAINING, from antiquity to the present, especially as reflected in the writings of deMause (1974b) among others, portrays what appears to us a panorama of horrors. In classical Greece children were subjected to such devices and practices as shackles for the feet, handcuffs, gags and bloody Spartan flagellation contests

resulting in youths being whipped to death (deMause, 1974a). Beating instruments included whips of all kinds, shovels, canes, iron rods, bundles of sticks, special whips made of small chains, and a special instrument used by school masters called a flapper, which was designed to raise blisters when used. Even royalty was not spared the prescribed dosage of corporal punishment; Louis XIII, for example, was whipped every morning from the age of 25 months.

By the late medieval period, the extraordinary excesses of "acceptable" child abuse began to be tempered. Thus, one thirteenth century law stated that if a child were beaten until it bled, it was good for the child's memory; however, it was illegal to beat the child to death (deMause, 1974b). The severity and frequency of child beating, while undergoing a civilized decline from the Renaissance to the Nineteenth century, still persisted in many contexts and communities. Thus a German schoolmaster could reckon that he had given 911,527 strokes with the stick, 124,000 lashes with the whip, 136,715 slaps with the hand and 1,115,800 boxes on the ears. The administration of corporal punishment was not reserved for the child's parents but extended to all of the child's caretakers and socializing agents.

While not all historians concur in this consistent dismal image of the history of child rearing (Aries, 1962; Calhoun, 1974), even a modified interpretation leaves one with a more than sobering impression of the way children were disciplined during this extended period. Especially sobering is the recognition that these brutal and pain inflicting modes of discipline were socially, legally and morally acceptable, if not normative. During this all too long period, parents, teachers and society at large, concurred in the use of disciplinary methods which today would lead to legal sanction as well as severe social disapproval. In terms of contemporary values and psychological orientation and insights, practices which were once socially approved are now considered as part of the

battered child syndrome, requiring therapeutic intervention for both the victim and the abuser. Since practices that were once considered as appropriate are now viewed as reprehensible, the disquieting possibility arises that practices which are today considered as acceptable, may be judged as barbaric by future generations; that is, the question is raised as to whether there are extant parental punishment practices that are considered as legitimate methods of child training and discipline that in a few decades will be perceived as examples of child abuse.

The extrapolation that one can make from this historical perspective strongly suggests that society's attitudes toward punishment practices will undergo continuous and significant modifications with the passage of time and increased insight into the effects of various disciplinary experiences upon children's development. Given the past course of historical changes in child rearing methods (Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Stendler, 1950; Vincent, 1951; Wolfenstein, 1953), it seems reasonable to infer that the path of future change will be in the direction of a more compassionate caring for children, in part reflected in a decline of corporal punishment and its psychological equivalents. The possibility of accelerating this process and creating in the present, the more effective and harmonious child rearing behaviors that we anticipate for the future--is appealing. Our consciousness of this historical development and of the psychological variables involved, can make this possibility a reality.

Our conjecture, regarding the future pattern of disciplinary practices, is not based solely on inferences drawn from historical modes. We believe that an analysis of the psychological effects of various modes of punishment and discipline provides a rationale for and leads to a similar conclusion. Moreover, when one views the issue of punishment practices in the context of

children's rights, the concept of the child abuse and what constitutes the infringement of children's rights becomes extended to include a broad range of physical and psychological punishments.

We begin our analysis of the issue of punishment practices with the basic assumption that a child has a right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment. Further, by cruel and unusual punishment we wish to go beyond current definitions of child abuse and battering to include all forms of punishment that have negative consequences for the growth and well being of the child. Moreover, we wish to question not only the prerogatives of teachers and caretakers in regard to disciplinary practices but also the disciplinary prerogatives of the parents themselves.

In broadening the domain of children's rights within the family, the responsibilities of children and the rights and responsibilities of parents are clearly acknowledged. One cannot articulate children's rights without delineating the province and role of the parent. Unlike the relationship of the child to most institutions in our society, e.g. the child in school, the child in a children's center, there are no written documents which explicate, define and enumerate the rights and responsibilities of family members to each other. While there are religious maxims, and social traditions that relate to discipline and laws pertaining primarily to exceptional situations, the rules and regulations guiding family interactions remain vague and implicit. Even less clear is the rationale and justification for many parental actions. These latter behaviors often acquire the properties of routines and become endowed with authority through the process of ritualization. A behavior which may have had some functional value in some special circumstances may become exaggerated, transformed and perpetuated into a parent practice or "rite" which may no longer be "right" for the child. Thus, in historical periods in which survival

was dependent upon primitive if not brutal modes of social interaction, there may have been some justification for parents and society to provide aggressive models and use corporal punishment. Similarly, in a time period when children were highly vulnerable to sexual assault and exploitation, the repression of masturbation and related erotic behaviors in young children may have been protective and functional. And, one can equally cite vestigil practices in regard to sex role differentiation and discrimination in occupational choice and opportunity.

Of course, the fact that a behavior is ritualized or traditional does not imply that it is, ipso facto, nonfunctional, inappropriate or psychologically harmful. Behaviors serve many different values and obviously have different functions in different cultures. As psychologists, we need to examine the psychological consequences of particular modes of discipline and provide social agents with alternatives from which they may choose on the basis of their particular values as well as acting in our role as advocates of children's rights. Before embarking on this task, it would be useful to review and summarize current patterns of parent punishment practices.

Patterns of Parent Punishment Practices

Complete data on normative and comparative child rearing practices, especially modal techniques descriptive and typical of different segments of our society, simply does not exist. In fact, with passing time, information on how parents actually socialize their children is becoming scarcer and scarcer. Interest in carrying out studies on the effects of multiple child rearing practices on the development of children (Sears, Maccoby & Levin, 1957) has waned and has been partially supplanted by more controlled but narrower studies on the mother-child dyadic interaction (Feshbach, 1973;

Hess & Shipman, 1965). Also, the once raging controversy regarding the relative permissiveness of the middle class and the greater punitiveness of the lower class in their overall child rearing behaviors (Havighurst & Davis, 1955) has ceased to be an issue of great concern. This decreased concern is in part a result of the inconsistent conclusions derived from different studies, in part, a recognition of the lack of comparability of methodologies employed and in part a consequence of the merging practices of all classes in our society (Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Erlanger, 1974).

Thus, it is not possible to present specific descriptions of particular punishment techniques employed by parents of different socioethnic backgrounds. However, there are extant studies which enable us to make general statements regarding general categories of discipline techniques that include a variety of parent punishment practices. Punishment is frequently dichotomized into two broad categories: physical punishment and psychological or love-oriented punishment (Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Hoffman, 1970). The term love-oriented does not imply nor is it used synonomously with positive training and control procedures since it includes guilt inducing and isolation techniques which are not considered as favorable mental health promoting strategies.

Physical punishment seems to be the more frequent child rearing practice in the family's repertoire of training strategies. In a series of papers addressed to the use of physical punishment, Steinmetz and Straus conclude that corporal punishment is almost a universal practice in England and the United States--with 84% to 97% of parents resorting to physical punishment at some period in their child's life (Steinmetz and Straus, 1973; Steinmetz & Straus, 1974). Parents use and threat of physical punishment continues through high school (Straus, 1973). The specific behaviors included here (as elsewhere) under the rubric of physical

punishment are beatings, slappings, kicking and throwing things at the child.

In a broad longitudinal study carried out in England (Newson, 1968) it was found that between 60% to 70% of mothers of four-year-olds "smacked" their children somewhere between once a day and once a week. It should be pointed out that most of the published data on punishment practices, historically or concurrently, focus on maternal practices. Inspection of the data and the studies do not reveal whether this one-sided parental picture is a reflection of procedures used (Cook-Grumprez, 1973) or whether home discipline is a maternal linked role behavior (Sunley, 1955).

Parents and citizens who interpreted the early student revolts at Berkeley during the 1960's as indicative of the more permissive child rearing practices of the 1940's, should be suprised to learn that in a study carried out by Heinstein (1965) on 809 mothers in California--that half reported using some form of physical punishment when asked what their usual method of punishment was. In that study, as in others (Cook-Grumprez, 1973) mothers use of physical punishment was definitely related to the extent of her education.

In a study carried out by Clifford (1959) in which mothers of children of three age groups, three, six and nine were interviewed, it was found that: age of the child was the most frequent predictor of discipline; mothers were most responsible for discipline; and that the type of discipline shifts with age from a more "manual" physical technique to verbal ones. The authors indicated that the 10 most frequent methods used at home were: reason, scolding, coaxing, spanking, diverting, threatening, ignoring, forceable removal of the child, isolation, and removal of privileges.

There are perhaps two general conclusions that are suggested by the data. The first is that our knowledge of how parents rear children is very limited.

Nevertheless, what is known indicates that parents make frequent use of physical punishment and also psychological punishment in training their children, probably without full realization of the effects of the punishment which they employ.

Effects of Physical and Psychological Punishment Practices

The avowed purpose of punishment is to reduce or eliminate the behavior that is being punished. Thus, in evaluating the effects of different modes of punishment and related disciplinary practices, an important criterion is the change that occurs in the punished response. However, the effects of parental reactions are not limited to an isolated prohibited response. Parents function as models, as sources of emotional security, as socializers and protectors. Because of the intimate relationship between child and parent, the effect of a parental reaction to a particular deviant behavior extends to nondeviant behaviors, to the child's self-system and may foster unintended and undesired side effects. Consequently, in assessing certain practices such as punishment and discipline, it is necessary to go beyond the intended response change and assess other areas of the child's personality which may have been differentially affected by the use of a particular mode of punishment. A parent who hits a child for being late to dinner serves as an aggressive model. In addition to becoming motivated by fear, to be prompt, the child is also learning that aggression is appropriate under certain circumstances; namely when one is disappointed or frustrated by others. Admittedly, the situation is complex, with many parameters influencing the child's response to the punishment administered for the infraction. However, the essential point is that the effects of a specific mode of punishment or discipline technique must be evaluated within the context of a larger interpersonal response system.

Most research bearing on the effects of variation in modes of punishment is carried out within the larger fabric of parental and social influence. Also, it is very difficult to isolate the effects of a unitary mode of discipline. Despite these restrictions and qualifications, research on punishment practices does yield meaningful results that provide an empirical framework for determining children's rights in regard to parental disciplinary behaviors. In summarizing a representative sampling of studies bearing on the effects of different punishment practices, we shall first consider physical punishment and then turn to the effects of such psychological punishments as the use of ridicule, shame and guilt techniques. It should be noted that in a number of studies reviewed, the mode of punishment is unclear or is comprised of a mixture of several different types.

Effects of physical punishment

The first systematic data on the effects of punishment emerged in the course of experimental studies of animal learning in which a form of physical punishment, electric shock, was made contingent upon a particular response by the animals (Estes, 1944; Skinner, 1938). Since in these early studies, punishment seemed to temporarily suppress a response rather than extinguish it, Skinner concluded that punishment was relatively ineffective as a technique for eliminating undesired behaviors and consequently focused on positive reinforcement as the critical element in his theory and methods of behavior shaping and modification.

This prevailed for several decades until challenged by Solomon (1964) and his associates and subsequently by other investigators (Boe & Church, 1966; Parke, 1970). In recent years additional research has been carried out with children although, for obvious ethical reasons, reproof and deprivation rather

than physical pain have been used as the principal mode of punishment. Parke, after an extensive series of studies, with sex to eight year old children, concluded:

> "It is unlikely that a socialization program based solely on punishment would be very effective; the child needs to be taught new appropriate responses in addition to learning to suppress unacceptable forms of behavior", (p.281).

These studies indicate that punishment not only fails to communicate to the child what the appropriate response is, but question its effect even as a suppressor of the undesired behavior. The suppression of an undesired behavior through punishment requires the right combination of a number of parameters including timing, intensity, consistency and the affectional relationship between the child and the punitive agent. Although physical punishment was not employed in these latter studies, its effectiveness should be dependent upon the same parameters as other modes of punishment.

The data most relevant to the effects of parental use of physical punishment are those yielded by studies of child rearing practices. While these studies have the virtue of being carried out in more naturalistic circumstances, the data reflect one or another methodological limitation. These include, among others, bias and error inherent in retrospective reports; the use of physical punishment confounded with variations in affection toward the child and degree of family stress; clustering in one category different types, degrees and frequencies of physical punishment. However, there is a suprising degree of consistency in the overall pattern of findings yielded by these studies, especially when one considers the diversity of procedures, measures, and populations employed by the various investigators.

Studies of child rearing practices, assessing the effects of parental punishment, especially the use of physical punishment, reflect a consistent

outcome. In general, the degree of parental punitiveness has been found to be positively correlated with various forms of psychopathology, especially delinquency and aggressive acting-out behavior (Feshbach & Feshbach, 1971; McCord, McCord & Howard, 1961). The positive relationship found in a large number of studies between parental use of physical punishment and aggressive, anti-social behavior in the child, is especially revealing. The suppressive potential of physical punishment, which undoubtedly occurs, is substantially outweighed by the instigating and modeling properties of parental resort to physical punishment. There seems to be very little, if any, empirical justification for the old adage "Spare the rod and spoil the child".

We concur with the methodological reservations raised by Yarrow, Campbell & Burton (1968) and recognize the difficulty of establishing casual relations between specific child rearing practices and specific behaviors in the child. Parental behaviors, such as severe punishment or maternal rejection, do not operate in isolation but occur in conjunction with other aspects of the home environment. In addition, the child's behavior may well affect his parents' reactions to him so that it is sometimes difficult to determine whether a particular parental method of handling a child is a cause or is a result of this child's action (Bell, 1968). Finally, a variety of methods, all subject to varying sources of distortions and error, have been used to assess the parent and the child's attitudes and behaviors. Consequently, many different interpretations of the data, especially where some studies report non-significant findings, can be offered.

Nevertheless, we are not alone in our interpretation of the findings, other psychologists have been equally impressed by the degree of consistency yielded by these very diverse studies of the effects of parental punishment

and have drawn conclusions similar to ours (Becker, 1964; Eron, Walder, Toigo & Lefkowitz, 1963).

It seems to us reasonable to infer from the empirical data on the effects of physical punishment that it is a procedure with a high probability of being counter-productive. It often fails to suppress the response it is intended to inhibit, and, in the case of aggression, may even exacerbate the behavior. There is also evidence that children who are subjected to physical punishment are less likely to have internalized moral standards than children subjected to other modes of discipline, displaying less guilt and acceptance of responsibility for deviant behaviors (Hoffman, 1970) and weakened ability to resist temptations (Feshbach, 1975b).

The use of corporal punishment by the state, by the school or by the parent--is simply a poor method of socializing children. Obviously, an occasional spank is not going to traumatize a child, destroy the spirit or make one anxious and hostile. However, the use of corporal punishment, by schools and by parents, as a prescribed mode of discipline for certain infractions, is objectionable. It sets a poor example for the child. It teaches the child that physical punishment is the appropriate response to use in conflict situations.

In addition to rejecting the use of physical punishment on empirical grounds, one can also question its use on humanistic grounds since being subjected to physical punishment can be seen as a violation of children's rights. As has been noted elsewhere (Feshbach, 1973), physical punishment is unfair. There is a basic inequity in an adult physically striking a child. The match is not equal. Physical punishment is also an undifferentiated response. Given the unique importance of language for the human species, the use of non-verbal, physical, maybe violent methods in the training of our young, takes

on the qualities of an atavistic response. Also, physical punishment cannot be escaped or undone; there is no way to escape the distress of physical pain. Subjecting others, child or adult, to deliberate physical pain is the prototype of inhumane behavior. It is human to be angry; it is also human to lose control over one's aggressive behavior. But to engage in the deliberate infliction of physical pain is unnecessary and, in our judgement, uncivilized.

Psychological punishment

The empirical evidence on the effects of psychological punishments such as ridicule, shame, rejection and guilt induction, is not nearly as substantial or as consistent as that relating to physical punishment. Punishment practices grossly categorized as love with drawal techniques and their effects are more complex and subtle and less easily assessed than those of physical punishment. We believe, along with most child psychologists that psychological punishments are also very destructive socializing techniques. However, here the case must rest upon clinical reports as well as upon quantitative data.

A major difficulty in evaluating the empirical literature on the use of various modes of psychological punishment is the fact that most studies do not distinguish among the different types of psychological punishment. The parent who punishes a child by refusing to speak to the youngster or acting in a cold manner is engaging in a form of rejection. This category of love withdrawal may well have different effects than the use of shame and guilt. Certainly, there is abundant evidence that as a generalized attitude toward the child, rejection by the parent has particularly destructive effects (Glueck & Glueck, 1950; Goldfarb, 1945; Lowrey, 1940; McCord, McCord & Howard, 1961). Studies bearing upon the effects of specific love withdrawal techniques in the context of a less negative familial atmosphere suggest that when the parents use guilt,

shame and emotional coldness, excessive anxiety and inhibition (Hoffman, 1963; Hoffman & Saltzein, 1967; Sears, 1961), and more extreme psychopathological disturbances result (Anthony, 1958; Bromberg, 1961; Rodnick, 1957). Thus Colby (1974) considers shame avoidance the key dynamic in his computer simulation model of paranoid behavior. The use of shame and related love withdrawal techniques have been most extensively studied in relationship to moral development (Hoffman, 1970). While the evidence here is not consistent, overall the data indicates that love withdrawal techniques do not facilitate the internalization of moral, prosocial attitudes and standards and, like physical punishment, may sometimes result in less generosity and resistance to temptation and more cheating and aggressive behaviors (Feshbach, 1973). Hoffman (1970) maintains that when love withdrawal contributes to effective moral development, it is accompanied by explanation, reasoning and related cognitive induction procedures. After reviewing pertinent experimental as well as child rearing data, he states "...love withdrawal does make the child more susceptible to adult influence but this has no necessary bearing on moral development" (Hoffman, 1970, p. 302). He concludes that the discipline practices most conducive to moral development, are other-oriented induction procedures.

Another category of research which questions the efficacy of anxiety evoking mechanisms, physical or psychological, is the literature on the behavioral accompaniments of aggression anxiety. The results of a number of studies indicate that, under permissive conditions, subjects with a high degree of anxiety over aggression will actually respond more aggressively than subjects with a low degree of aggression anxiety (Eron, Walder, Toigo & Lefkiwotz, 1963; Feshbach & Jaffe, 1969). Rather dramatic evidence bearing on the violence potential of aggression inhibited individuals is provided in studies of extremely assaultive homicidal individuals. Within this group, Megargee (Bromberg, 1961) has isolated a personality pattern labeled "Chronic Overcontrol".

These offenders appear to be highly repressed, outwardly repressed individuals, who are inwardly alienated and potentially capable of extremely violent acts.

Case histories of individuals who have committed homicides (Bromberg, 1961) make it likely that Megargee's chronic over controllers were subjected to physical as well as psychological punishment. Nevertheless, while the evidence bearing on psychological punishment is not as substantial as the data on physical punishment, there appears to be a reasonable basis for concluding that neither fear of physical pain or fear of psychological pain are conducive to optimal psychological development and functioning. The question then arises, if we reject physical and psychological punishment as both infringements of children's rights and empirically ineffective, what can the parent use for child training and socialization?

Alternatives to Physical and Psychological Punishment

Alternatives to punishment can be grouped into two gross categories: 1) the training of behaviors which are incompatible with the disapproved responses and 2) parental action contingent upon the child's commission of a deviant act.

Training approaches in the first category have been discussed extensively elsewhere and will be only briefly attended to here (Feshbach, 1970; Feshbach & Feshbach, 1972). These include the positive reinforcement of prosocial behaviors and the arrangement of the child's environment so as to facilitate the evocation of these desired behaviors. There is abundant evidence to support the proposition that the facilitation through reinforcement or modeling of responses incompatible with socially disapproved behaviors is an important element in the effective socialization of the child.

If a child is raised in a household in which the parents display and

reinforce cooperative behaviors and reasoned, nonaggressive solutions to conflict, then the child is more likely to manifest these same behaviors and less likely to engage in deviant behaviors

requiring some form of disciplinary response. This observation, though simple, is important. It implies that a substantial component of the effective discipline of a child is the modeling and reinforcing of responses which will reduce the frequency of disapproved behaviors which are the occasion for disciplinary actions. Another direct method for accomplishing this same objective is to arrange the child's environment in such a way as to minimize the motivation and opportunities for infractions. Parents utilize this procedure when they remove fragile objects from the reach of toddlers. A similar principle is involved when a child therapist helps a parent to modify the style in which communications are transmitted to a child; the parent presenting a modified stimulus pattern which elicits a modified response for the child (Patterson, Cobb & Ray, 1972).

In addition to these direct methods for enhancing the probability of desired behaviors, there are a number of processes and behavior patterns which have a more indirect, but nevertheless significant influence on the occurrence of socially undesirable behaviors. One such process is empathy (Feshbach, 1975a). The child who is empathic is more able to perceive events from the perspective of others and to share affective experiences. Because of these properties--the ability to experience the other's pain as well as pleasure, and the capacity to understand a situation in terms of the other's frame of reference, an empathic child is less likely to use aggressive solutions to conflict situations and more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors than a child who is not empathic (Feshbach & Feshbach, 1969; Hoffman, 1975). There is some evidence linking empathic behavior in the child, particularly in girls, to parental use of reasoning, explanation and related cognitive strategies in

their interactions with the child (Feshbach, 1975a, Hoffman, 1975). These cognitive strategies, more generally characterized as induction techniques, also constitute an important alternative available to the parent in our second category of parental response modes bearing on the discipline and control of the child--namely parental actions pursuant to the child's commission of a deviant act. In spite of exemplary parent training behaviors, children will still commit deviant acts. A substantial frequency of parent child interactions pertains to the regulation of and response to infractions by the child. These infractions vary widely with respect to type, severity and antecedents or provocation. Almost all parents take some cognizance of this variablity in the nature of the child's misbehavior and employ, accordingly, a variety of disciplinary procedures. At the same time, extent to which parents still rely on physical and psychological punishment is a reflection of the degree to which principles of effective discipline are inadequately understood and practiced.

This is not to imply that alternative formulas can be readily prescribed. Psychologists have not yet developed guidelines or manuals of discipline for parents to employ in socializing the child. Individual differences among children and the almost infinite variety of circumstances with which parents must deal render a programmed approach inappropriate. However, it is possible to designate some useful principles which can be employed as guidelines in responding to infractions by the child. These principles, which are designed to provide alternatives to physical and psychological punishment practices, presuppose that the function of discipline is not to penalize the child but "to correct, mold or perfect the mental facilities or moral character". Also, while these alternatives are intended to enhance children's rights, they are not intended to diminish children's responsibilities. By children's "responsibilities" are meant those behaviors characterized by independence and

self-regulation and serving familial or social needs. Expectations for the child in regard to responsibilities must, of course, take into account the child's developmental level and the child's other needs. Nevertheless, given these restrictions, the assumption of responsibilities is important for the child's development, and the proposed alternatives are compatible with this requirement.

The critical dimension that the parent must consider is disciplining a child for an infraction is the basis for the child's misbehavior rather than the negative consequences of the misbehavior. The Piagetian hierarchy of moral development--in which moral judgements made in terms of the causes of an infraction (e.g., accidental vs. intentional) are at a higher level of cognitive development than judgements made in terms of the consequences of an action (e.g., a valuable broken vase vs. an inexpensive broken vase) applies with special cogency to the disciplinary actions of a parent. It would be unrealistic to expect the parent to function as a psychologist in attempting to account for the child's misbehavior. However, by being attuned to particular categories of "causes" or antecedents of misbehaviors, the parent is able to take a more differentiated and articulated, and therefore more appropriate, disciplinary action.

One can distinguish at least four major categories of determinants of infractions (Feshbach & Feshbach, 1973): 1) Inadequate ego controls; 2) Misappraisals; 3) Objectionable habits; and 4) Cognitively mediated objectionable behavior.

Inadequate ego controls. The young child, especially, performs actions on impulse and commits infractions because it lacks self-control mechanisms. Verbal admonitions with age appropriate explanations are useful here. The parent in saying "No, don't play with the radio; it may break and you won't

be able to listen to it", is providing the child with a verbal structure which the child can repeat and use to help regulate its behavior. Changing the environment and removing objects which evoke undesired behaviors is also a useful approach but may not, of course, always be feasible. In general, the parent's tactic here is to prevent the impulsive action from occurring, as well as providing the child with verbal explanations and other responses which will facilitate the development of self-control.

Misappraisals. Children frequently fail to carry out a chore or commit some other infraction because of ambiguous communications regarding what is expected of them and regarding the consequences of failing to conform to expectations. "Ignorance of the law" may be an inadequate excuse in the courtroom but it is very germane in the home. Parents need to make explicit their often implicit expectations of the child; they need to make clear the behaviors that are approved, those that are disapproved and the nature of the contingent punishment. In considering possible "punishments", Piaget's (1948) and Kohlberg's (1963; 1969) distinction between retributive and distributive justice is very useful. Retributively based punishments are retaliatory in nature and bear little relationship to the infraction. Distributively based punishments are restorative in nature and are intrinsically related to the infraction. Swatting a child who has been aggressive to a peer is an example of retributive punishment. Requiring the child to aid or make an adjustment to the injured child is an example of distributive punishment. Loss of a privilege which is contingent upon positive social behaviors is another example of distributive punishment. Distributive punishments generally entail not only a loss of some privilege of the expenditure of time and effort but also participation in an approved behavior.

Objectionable Habits. If a child's misbehavior is an instance of a persistent, specific habitual mode of behavior, then the parent's best strategy is to ignore the behavior and to elicit and reinforce a desired response in the presence of the stimuli that evoke the disapproved response. Rather than punishing a child for eating with her fingers, the parent should provide the child with a utensil and focus on the reinforcement of appropriate eating responses. Sometimes, a habitual behavior may be so disruptive that the parent may have to exercise immediate control through punishment. However, the principle of distributive punishment should apply here.

Cognitively mediated objectionable behaviors.

due to lack of control, to poor habit, to misinformation but are carried out by the child with forethought, challenge and awareness of the consequences of the misbehavior. It is to this kind of situation that the principle of distributive punishment best applies. This procedure should be effective unless there are other complicating factors involved. If the behavior persists, increasing the level of punishment is not likely to be effective, and may well be counter-productive. Under these circumstances, the parents should probably seek outside guidance and help.

This presentation of alternatives is intended to be illustrative rather than complete. The propositions that have been offered here require empirical study, validation and refinement. However, we believe that this is a more productive course to pursue than approaches which focus on obedience derived from rigid role definitions, often enforced by the use of physical punishments (Baumrind, 1974).

Implications and Implementation

Having arrived at a constellation of discipline practices that promise to

serve the functions of socialization while furthering the cause of children's rights and welfare, the matter and manner of fostering and implementing these child training practices becomes the crucial task. How is this to be achieved?

A major barrier in the education of and communication to parents of effective and psychologically sound socialization practices is the secrecy that surrounds this area of interaction. Many parents are uneasy and embarrassed about disclosing their attitudes and behaviors in the realm of child rearing, especially in regard to the area of discipline. In general, we have found that it is difficult to obtain child rearing information about the kinds of disciplinary responses parents employ in the various situations in which children fail to meet parental demands or otherwise engage in disapproved behaviors.

This difficulty has a counterpart in the lack of freely available accessible sources of information, advice and facilities for parents. A prevalent attitude still exists in our society that parenting is a private responsibility and that if society becomes involved in the process, collective upbringing of children is implied. The myriad of books providing advice for parents and the mushrooming of parent training programs relfect the anxiety, curiosity and needs of parents for guidance and support in their child rearing efforts and roles.

We suggest that what is needed to serve the interests and the rights of the child and of the parents as well, is AN INVASION OF PARENT PRIVACY in the child rearing sector of our society. As long standing members of groups concerned with the maintenance of civil liberties, including the right to privacy, we recognize that our suggestion deviates from an important social principle. However, in our hierarchy of values, protecting the child is a more important principle than protecting parental privacy.

We believe that how a parent rears a child should be an open matter, available for discussion, help and inquiry. The very changes in the

communication status of child rearing practices from a private to a more public domain can, in itself, have profound constructive effects. It would raise parental awareness of the character and consequences of their practices; it would help reduce the anxieties and uncertainties that are so often connected with child rearing; it would facilitate sharing and mutual support and understanding. We would like to emphasize that we believe that the most effective route to the "INVASION OF PARENT PRIVACY" is through education and the provision of concrete support mechanisms for the assistance of individuals in their critical, social role as parents.

Thus, reciprocity is a critical element in our proposal to remove the nonconstructive shield of privacy currently surrounding parent socialization practices. Parents have a right to expect help and receive assistance from their community in regard to information, guidance and child care resources. Children's rights will then be served in two fundamental ways. The community will function as a resource to the parents which is their right, and as a protector and advocate for children which is their right.

References

Anthony, E. J. An experimental approach to the psychopathology of childhood: Autism. British Journal of Medical Psychology, 1958, 31(3&4), 211-225.

Aries, P. Centuries of childhood: A social history of family life. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1962.

Baumrind, D. Coleman II: Utopian fantasy a· sound social innovation. School Review, November 1974, 83(1), 69-9i

Becker, W. C. Consequences of different kinds of parental discipline. In M. L. Hoffman & L. W. Hoffman (Eds.), Review of child development research. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964, 169-208.

Bell, R. Q. A re-interpretation of the direction of effects in studies of socialization. Psychological Review, 1968, 75, 81-95.

Berger, N. The child, the law and the state. In P. Adams, et al., (Eds.), Children's rights. New York: Praeger, 1971, 153-179.

Boe, E. E. & Church, R. M. The Permanent Effect of Punishment During Extinction. Paper presented at the meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, New York, April 1966.

Bromberg, W. The mold of murder; A psychiatric study of homocide. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1961.

Bronfenbrenner, U. Socialization and social class through time and space. In E. E. Maccoby, T. M. Newcombe & E. L. Hartley, Readings in social psychology. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1958, 400-425.

Calhoun, D. On the psychohistory of childhood. Review of L. deMause (Ed.), The history of childhood. History of Education Quarterly, Fall 1974, 14 (3), 371-377.

Clifford, E. Discipline in the home: A controlled observational study of parental practices. Journal of Genetic Psychology, 1959, 95, 45-82.

Colby, K. M. Ten criticisms of Parry. Stanford Artificial Intelligence Laboratory. Cumputer Science Department #STAN-CS-74-457, 1974.

Cook-Gumprez, J. Social control and socialization--A study of class differences in the language of maternal control. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973.

deMause, L. The evolution of childhood. History of Childhood Quarterly, 1974a, 1 (4).

deMause, L. (Ed.) The history of childhood. New York: The Psychohistory Press, 1974b.

Erlanger, H. S. Social class differences in parents use of physical punishment. In S. K. Steinmetz & M. A. Straus (Eds.), Violence in the family. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1974.

Eron, L. D., Walder, L. O., Toigo, R. & Lefkowitz, M. M. Social class parental punishment for aggression, and child aggression. Child Development, 1963, 34(4), 849-867.

Estes, W. K. An experimental study of punishment. Psychological Monograph, 1944, 57, (3), (Whole No. 263).

Falk, H. Corporal punishment: A social interpretation of its theory and practice in the schools of the United States. New York: Teachers College, 1941.

Feshbach, N. D. The effects of violence in childhood. Journal of Clinical Psychology, Fall 1973, 11 (3), 28-31.

Feshbach, N. D. Empathy in children: Some theoretical and empirical considerations. The Counseling Psychologist, 1975a(In press).

Feshbach, N. D. The Relationship of Child-Rearing Factors in Children's Aggression, Empathy and Related Positive and Negative Social Behaviors. Paper read as part of a N.A.T.O. conference on Determinants and Origins of Aggressive Behavior, Monaco, July 1973. In J. Dewit & W. W. Hartup (Eds.), Determinants and Origins of Aggressive Behavior. The Hague Netherlands: Mouton Publishers, 1975b.

Feshbach, N. D. & Feshbach, S. Children's aggression. Young Children, 1971, 26, (6), 364-377. Reprinted in W. W. Hartup (Ed.), The young child, Vol. 2, Washington, D.C.: NAEYC, 1972.

Feshbach, N. D. & Feshbach, S. Cognitive Processes in the Self-Regulation of Children's Aggression: Fantasy and Empathy. Invited paper presented at the Conference on Developmental Aspects of Self-Regulation, La Jolla, California, February 1972. To be printed in J. Block & J. Block (Eds.), Developmental Aspects of Self-Regulation.

Feshbach, N. D. & Feshbach, S. The relationship between empathy and aggression in two age groups. Developmental Psychology, 1969, 1 (2), 102-107.

Feshbach, S. Aggression. In P. H. Mussen (Ed.), Carmichael's Manual of Child Psychology, Third Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1970.

Feshbach, S. & Feshbach, N. D. Alternatives to corporal punishment: Implications for training and controls. The Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, Fall 1973, 11 (3), 46-48.

Feshbach, S. & Jaffe, Y. The effects of group versus individual decisions on aggressive behavior. Unpublished study, University of Califronia at Los Angeles, 1969.

Finkelstein, B. Pedagogy as intrusion: Teaching values in popular primary schools in nineteenth century America, history of childhood quarterly. Journal of Psychohistory, Winter 1975, 2 (3).

Gil, D. G. Paper presented at a conference on Child Abuse and Neglect at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. June, 1974.

Gil, D. G. Violence against children: Physical child abuse in the United States. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.

Glueck, S. & Glueck, E. Unraveling juvenile delinquency. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950.

Goldfarb, W. Psychological privation in infancy and subsequent adjustment. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1945, 15, 247-255.

Havighurst, R. J. & Davis, A. A comparison of the Chicago and Harvard studies of social class differences in child rearing. American Sociology Review, 1955, 20, 438.

Heinstein, M. Child Rearing in California: A Study of Mothers With Young Children. Bureau of Maternal and Child Health, State of California, Department of Public Health, 1965.

Helfer, R. E. & Kempe, C. H. (Eds.) The battered child and his family. Philadelphia: J. J. Lippincott, 1972.

Hess, R. D. & Shipman, V. C. Cognitive elements in maternal behavior. In J. P. Hill (Ed.), The Minnesota symposia on child psychology, Vol I. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1967.

Hoffman, M. L. Child rearing practices and moral development: Generalizations from empirical research. Child Development, 1963, 34, 295-318.

Hoffman, M. L. Moral development. In P. H. Mussen (Ed.), Carmichael's Manual of Child Psychology, Third Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1970.

Hoffman, M. L. Moral internalization, parental power and the nature of parent-child interaction. Developmental Psychology, 1975, 11 (2), 228-239.

Hoffman, M. L. & Saltzein, H. D. Parent discipline and the child's moral development. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1967, 5, 45-57.

Holt, J. Escape from childhood: The needs and rights of children. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972.

Jenkins, S. & Norman, E. Filial deprivation and foster care. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.

Kaufman, I. Discussion of Physical Abuse of Children. Presented at National Conference on Social Welfare sponsored by children's division, American Humane Association, New York, June 1, 1962.

Kempe, C. H. A practical approach to the protection of the abused child and rehabilitation of the abusing parent. Symposium on Child Abuse Pediatrics, 1973, 51, part 3.

Kempe, C. H. & Helfer, R. E. Helping the battered child and his family. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1972.

Kempe, C. H., Silverman, F. N., Steele, B. B., Droegemueller, W. & Silver, H. K. The battered-child syndrome. Journal of the American Medical Association, 1962, 181, 17-24.

Kohlberg, L. Stage and sequence: The cognitive-developmental approach to socialization. In D. A. Goslin (Ed.) Handbook of socialization theory and research. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969.

Kohlberg, L. Moral development and identification. In H. Stevenson (Ed.), Child psychology. 62nd Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.

Light, R. Abuse and neglected children in America: A study of alternative policies. In The rights of children, Harvard Educational Review, 1974, Series 9, 198-240.

Lowrey, L. G. Personality distortion and early institutional care. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1940, 10, 576-586.

McCord, W., McCord, J. & Howard, A. Familial correlates of aggression in non-delinquent male children. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 1961, 62, 72-93.

McFerran, J. Parents' groups in protective services. Children, 1958, 5, 223-228.

Mercer, J. R. A policy statement on assessment procedures and the rights of children. In The rights of children, Harvard Educational Review, Series No. 9, 1974, 328-344.

Mnookin, R. H. Foster care: In whose best interest? In The rights of children, Harvard Educational Review, Series No. 9, 1974, 158-196.

National Center for Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect. National Child Protection Newsletter, 1973, 1 (2), 1-3.

Newson, J. E. Four year-olds in an urban community. Chicago: Aldine, 1968.

Ohlin, L. E., Coates, R. B. & Miller, A. D. Radical correctional reform: A case study of the Massachusetts Youth Correctional System. In The rights of children, Harvard Educational Review, 1974, 120-157.

Parents Anonymous, Inc. Procedures and concepts manual. Redondo Beach, California: National Parent Chapter, 1972.

Parke, R. D. The role of punishment in the socialization process. In R. A. Hoppe, G. A. Milton & E. C. Simmel (Eds.), Early experiences and the processes of socialization. New York: Academic Press, 1970, 81-108.

Parke, R. D. & Collmer, W. Child abuse: An interdisciplinary review. To be published in M. Hetherington (Ed.), Reviews of Research, Volume V, 1975.

Patterson, G. R., Cobb, J. A. & Ray, R. S. A social engineering technology for retraining families of aggressive boys. In H. E. Adams & I. P. Unikel (Eds.), Issues and trends in behavior therapy. Springfield, Ill.: Chas. C. Thomas, 1972.

Paulsen, M. G. Legal protections against child abuse. Children, 1966, 13, 42-48.

Paulson, M. & Blake, P. The physically abused child: a focus on prevention. Child Welfare, 1969, 48, 86-95.

Piaget, I. The moral judgment of the child. New York: Harcourt, 1932. Republished: Glencoe Illinois, Free Press, 1948.

Radbill, S. X. A history of child abuse and infanticide. In R. E. Helfer & C. H. Kempe (Eds.), The battered child. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Robinson, D. Harm, offense and nuisance: Some first steps in the establishment of an ethics of treatment. American Psychologist, April 1974, 29 (4), 233-238.

Rodham, H. Children under the law. In The rights of children, Harvard Educational Review, Series No. 9, 1974, 1-28.

Rodnick, E. H. & Garmezy, N. An experimental approach to the study of motivation in schizophrenia. In M. R. Jones (Ed.), Nebraska symposium on motivation. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1957, 109-184.

Sears, R. R. Relation of early socialization experiences to aggression in middle childhood. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 1961, 63, 466-492.

Sears, R. R., Maccoby, E. E. & Levin, H. Patterns of child rearing. Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson & Co., 1957.

Skinner, B. F. The behavior of organisms. New York: Appleton, 1938.

Solomon, R. L. Punishment. American Psychologist, 1964, 19, 239-253.

Steinmetz, S. K. & Straus M. A. The family as cradle of violence. Society, September-October, 1973, 10, 50-56.

Steinmetz, S. K. & Straus M. A. (Eds.), Violence in the family. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1974.

Stendler, C. B. Sixty years of child training practices. Journal of Pediatrics, 1950, 36, 122-134.

Straus M. A. Some social antecedents of physical punishment: A linkage theory interpretation. Journal of Marriage and the Family, November 1973, 2, 658-663.

Sunley, R. Early 19th century American literature on child rearing. In M. Mead & M. Wolfenstein, Childhood in contemporary cultures. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955.

Vincent, C. E. Trends in infant care ideas. Child Development, 1951, 22.

Wolfenstein, M. Trends in infant care. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1953, 23, 120-130.

Yarrow, M. R., Campbell, J. D. & Burton, R. V. Child rearing--An inquiry into research and methods. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1968.